

THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A GREAT IMPERIAL
INTELLIGENCE UNION

AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING THE
CONSOLIDATION OF THE EMPIRE

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
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BEFORE THE "EIGHTY CLUB" ON JULY 20, 1906

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I.

LORD LUCAS,

AND MEMBERS OF THE EIGHTY CLUB,—

It is a high gratification for me to be present here this evening, as the guest of this influential club, and to be asked to express my views on a subject which I have long earnestly considered; a subject which I venture to think is of the greatest interest to every British community.

The proposal which I am privileged to explain, as briefly as possible, to the "Eighty Club," is not altogether new; but, heretofore, efforts have been confined largely to the circulation of letters and documents designed to educate the public mind on what may be regarded as a new subject. It is not a party question. No Government has, as yet, been definitely committed to it in its entirety. The attempts made to educate, have, in some parts of the Empire, and especially in Canada, met with a measure of success. I hold in my hand a sessional paper which, within the last two or three weeks, has been issued by the Canadian Parliament. In this Parliamentary Return much detailed information is set forth: it contains 63 pages, which I would greatly wish to condense into a few sentences, in order that I might bring the matter to your attention this evening.

Unlike previous proposals which have been made, such as those for creating an Imperial Council or an Advisory Council, schemes of Imperial Federation, or other great schemes for the organisation of the Empire, the present modest suggestion is very simple and very practical, and, if I may venture to say so, I think it has also the merit of being characterised by a

measure of common sense. This much can be said of it, that it is entirely non-party and non-jingo ; and, while quite humble and unobjectionable in its pretensions, a little consideration will satisfy you that it must eventually come to be regarded as far-reaching in its aims, and that it cannot fail in the long-run to bring about results of the very highest importance.

Already many persons have formed the opinion that the documents issued by the Canadian Parliament furnish evidence that the proposal is far better calculated to promote the commercial interests and advance the unity of the whole British people than any other scheme yet promulgated. It is made perfectly obvious from such evidence that the time is not ripe for more ambitious proposals, that premature attempts to put them in force might do great harm, and that no cut-and-dried scheme for the organisation of the Empire will be found acceptable to large masses of those mutually concerned ; that the very first step is to adopt some effective means by and through which the several communities of British people around the Globe shall become better acquainted with each other, and more familiar with matters relating to their mutual well-being. Organisation to be enduring must be based on mutual sympathy and confidence, which, again, must spring from mutual knowledge.

What is really required is a comprehensive means of dispelling ignorance and establishing mutual relationship. The first requisite is an adequate service for disseminating useful knowledge throughout the Empire, a well-designed service for the mutual enlightenment and mutual advantage of all classes in each separate British community.

An occasional speech at a social or other gathering in London, or in any other city, is entirely inadequate in view of the immensely important purposes to be achieved. The Imperial Penny Post is undoubtedly an inestimable boon, but, valuable as it is as a means of drawing our people around the world closer to each other, it is quite inadequate as a speedy means of com-

munication between countries separated by the earth's semi-circumference, or any considerable portion thereof. What the circumstances require and demand to-day is a fully organised public service, having at command a complete system of connected Cables girdling the Globe; an electric circle forming an instantaneous means of communication by which the millions may be reached daily, or at least frequently, in each and every self-governing British community in both hemispheres; obviously such a service would exert an enormous influence in advancing the interests and in unifying the aims and aspirations of each of those communities.

I have indicated in these few words the ideal means of mutual information which it is desirable to secure. It has, for want of a better name, been designated an "Imperial Intelligence Service." The question before us is, "Can such a service be attained?"

The Canadian Parliament has furnished the reply in the documents printed and issued by the King's Printer.¹ One of these documents is a letter to the Earl of Elgin, in which will be found suggestions respecting the creation of an Imperial Intelligence Department, established in the common interests and especially for the benefit of the many, a widespread organisation, coextensive with the Empire, dedicated to the acquisition, collection, transmission by cable, and publication in a free-handed manner, of intelligence on any subject of general interest, for the information and education of the British people of every class in every quarter of the Globe.

If you will permit me, I shall read a few sentences from this letter to Lord Elgin on the free exchange of Empire news (page 9).

"In addition to a Central Board in the British Metropolis, there should be local Boards and agencies in each self-governing community, where desired information would be acquired. It

¹ To be obtained, free of charge, on application to the Secretary of the Eighty Club, 3 Hare Court, Temple, London, E.C.

would be the duty of each Board to take proper means to arrange and edit the information for free transmission by cable to the other Boards, and by them made available for simultaneous publication in the daily or weekly journals in all the great cities of the Empire.

“By this means the people of the whole Empire would be brought into continuous touch. Each person, on opening his daily newspaper, would look into the column or columns under the heading, ‘Empire Cable News,’ for the Imperial Intelligence of the day, and would there find a trustworthy record of the matters of most vital importance and interest to every British community.

“No argument is needed to point out the advantages which would spring from such an Agency. It is impossible to conceive any other means which would so speedily and so effectively enlighten the masses of British people on all matters which concern their common welfare. By the term ‘British people,’ I do not mean the inhabitants of the United Kingdom alone, I include the British people in other portions of the Globe, in India, and in the several self-governing communities steadily growing into populous and prosperous States. Even small portions of such Empire news regularly furnished daily in the local newspapers would be a thousand times better than the almost entire absence of such intelligence which now generally obtains. It undoubtedly would have a powerful educative influence, and the high political effect would be to foster a broad Imperial patriotism. It would open to the intelligence of all our people, within the circle of the ‘Empire Cables,’ wider issues connected with the advancement and development of the Imperial fabric; we are warranted in believing that it would stimulate the sense of common citizenship, and, in time, lead to reciprocal affinity eventually approaching a general unity of ideas.

“The machinery of a fully equipped Intelligence Department once provided, we may then, with confidence, assume that the

better union and the collective prosperity of the British Empire 'may be wisely left to develop in accordance with circumstances, and, as it were, of their own accord.'

"I share very fully with every one with whom I have conferred, the opinion that satisfactory results must reasonably be expected to follow the establishment of a wisely arranged Intelligence Department. The Imperial Press Service suggested would tell its story and perform its functions, not once, not intermittently, but daily throughout every year. It would, like the continual dropping of water, produce effective results. By means of this perennial flow we may confidently hope to have the spirit and principles of the British Constitution in course of time pervading, invigorating, vivifying the whole Empire, and it is this spirit and these principles, inherited from the centuries, which would beget that sympathy and affection which, although as light as the air we breathe, would constitute the cohesive forces to bind together the Empire, under the one flag and sovereign, as with bonds of steel."

The proposed Imperial Intelligence Service, uniting the several British possessions mentioned, requires as a necessity the nationalisation of (1) a Land Telegraph line through Canada, (2 and 3) of Cables traversing the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, all of which, together with the already established Pacific Cable, would form an electric girdle around the Globe touching only British soil and wholly State-owned. This is an indispensable preliminary to the great scheme of an "Imperial Intelligence Service," the name of which does not really convey its full meaning and in some respects is misleading; but, whatever the name, the proposed organisation is believed to be a movement of the very first importance and full of promise. It would cost as estimated £5,000,000:—a sum which, when divided into equitable proportions between the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, the East and West Indies, would prove but a light

burden on each. Moreover, it is contemplated that all working expenses would be fully met by earnings derived from "paying traffic." A few hours in each twenty-four would suffice for the free transmission daily of such news as the Intelligence Department would desire to send on ordinary occasions.

In the letters from some fifty of the foremost men in Canada, extracts from which are furnished in the Parliamentary Return to which I have referred, it will be found that the majority of the writers are of opinion that an Intelligence Department, such as outlined, should take precedence of everything else. Indeed, some of our far-seeing men incline to the opinion that, if such a Department be organised, very little more will be required, and that the further development of the Empire may wisely be left to circumstances as they arise. A well-known Canadian authority on political science, Professor Adam Short of Queen's University, writes: "The central idea I entirely agree with and have often expressed. Indeed, I am so fully convinced of the transcendent importance of getting the British peoples into touch with each other, not on one line only, but on all possible lines, that I quite expect, when this is reasonably well accomplished, they will find the need for any special or formal machinery, such as an Imperial Council, etc., quite unnecessary; having, then, as a matter of fact, secured something as far superior to it as the broad, flexible, and ever up-to-date British constitution is superior to any possible written constitution."

I may mention that I have received convincing evidence of the favourable views held, not in Canada alone, but likewise in the United Kingdom, India, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa, with respect to the policy of establishing an Imperial Intelligence Service such as I have endeavoured to portray. This evidence points to the possibility of such a service proving to be the fundamental basis and source from which all development along Imperial lines must proceed.

The utilisation of the girdle of Empire Cables in conjunction with the daily press in every British capital and in every great centre of commerce is regarded as of the utmost importance. The daily press is read by the millions. It is one of the ordinary educators of modern times, and in co-operation with the Empire Cables may be placed in the position of a great uplifting power. By whatever name the combination may be known, the arrangement proposed may be regarded as essentially the main desideratum needed to dispel the ignorance which prevails in so many parts of the Empire respecting other parts, and to mould the minds of the British people everywhere to their mutual advantage.

I cannot be wrong in my belief that a movement to inaugurate such an Imperial organisation as I have endeavoured to indicate is in entire harmony with the precedents and practice of the powerful political party which this Club represents. Has not the principle of the Empire Cable system been settled by the construction of the Pacific Cable through six governments in partnership? and may not the Liberal party worthily identify itself with the completion of the enlarged system now proposed, in the interests of Imperial unity? The Colonies already owe to the great Liberal party a debt in practical sympathy and co-operation which is gladly recognised. Is it not to the political ideas represented by this Club that they are so largely indebted for the gift of self-government? And is not the permanence of the Empire assured by that spontaneous gift?—a gift bestowed freely and fully without a single reservation,—a proceeding, the wisdom of which is now acknowledged by all parties, and which has found justification in the position of the Colonies to-day. Whatever they were in the past, do we not find them becoming great powerful States, with an ever-deepening loyalty under the one flag, and co-operating with the Mother Country in working out a common destiny!

Before resuming my seat I ask you to bear with me while I

read a few lines from two of the best known and wisest men in the outer Empire—one of Dutch origin in South Africa, the other of Irish origin in Canada. If they are far removed from each other in a physical sense, they are very near each other in spirit. I select these letters from many others recently received, they are private letters, but the extracts I shall read are in reference to an exceedingly important public subject, and the words are inspiring.

Mr. J. HOFFMEYER, South Africa, writes:—

“Only this much I will say in connection with the matter of cable communication between the various parts of the British Empire: that if the political men of light and leading in the Empire were alive to its true welfare, they would not only aim at the acquisition by the State of all existing British Cables and the filling up of all gaps in the existing cable system, but follow up the Imperial penny postage with a scheme of a-penny-a-word-cablegrams (with a minimum rate per message of one shilling) between Great Britain and all Colonies, as well as between the Colonies mutually. If I were still a young man with the same optimistic feelings as those of 1887, I would make the adoption of such a scheme *the main object of my life, and carry it too.*”

Senator Sir JAMES GOWAN (commonly known as Judge Gowan) wrote a few days before I left Canada:—

“The undertaking is grand in conception, practical and patriotic. It cannot fail to prove a potent factor in hastening the consolidation of the Empire. Oneness of the Empire is no wild or visionary hope, but a rational and feasible proposition—*I am with you up to the hilt.*”

Having now submitted very briefly some views which are held on the subject of an “Imperial Intelligence Service,” I wish to express very cordially my thanks to “The Committee of the Eighty Club” for inviting me to address you, and for the patient hearing you have so kindly extended to me.

II.

Letter from Sir Sandford Fleming, having special reference to the difficulties raised during the discussion which followed the Address.

EDINBURGH, August 8th, 1906.

R. C. HAWKIN, Esq.,
Secretary of the "Eighty Club,"
London.

SIR,—Referring to the scheme which I had the honour to submit to the consideration of the "Eighty Club" on July 20th, I understand it is desired by the Committee that I should, before returning to Canada, express my views at some greater length, and especially on the questions raised by the several speakers on the occasion referred to.

The chief claim made for the proposal is, not so much that it may be regarded as a substitute for other schemes heretofore advanced, having for their object the unification of the Empire, but that if any substantial progress is to be made in that direction, as it seems to me, the policy suggested must take precedence of any such schemes; that if it be pre-eminently necessary to have freer intercourse, with fuller and closer political, commercial, and social relations between the different States which go to make up the Empire, there is no conceivable means by which these objects can more easily and more naturally be achieved.

The proposal is not solely in the interests of these islands, vastly important as they are; it is not for the benefit of any one class, or of any one section of the British people; it is projected in the interest of the *entire* Empire, and its object is to advance the concrete well-being of the British people throughout the world. It is designed for the benefit of every

Britain beyond the seas equally with the Mother of them all. I cannot therefore be wrong in the conviction that it appeals with special force to the principles, the sympathies, and the traditions of the "Eighty Club."

DISCUSSION AND CRITICISM.

In the discussion which followed my address on the 20th ultimo, some difficulties were raised which in themselves indicated that an interest was awakened in the subject which I had the honour to submit. All the speakers were agreed as to the urgency, in the interests of Imperial unity, for freer and fuller intercourse between each one of the oversea British communities, and between all of them and the United Kingdom. The practical value of the underlying idea of a system of State-owned globe-girdling cables, as a means of consummating this object, was admitted. It was fully recognised that facilities should be provided for the systematic distribution over the Empire of information on every subject of Imperial interest. Moreover, some of the speakers attached so much importance to the regular and full dissemination of such information that they regarded the cost of accomplishing that purpose as entirely secondary.

THE POLICY SUGGESTED.

The burden of the criticisms by the speakers was the fear that in practice it would be no easy matter to arrange for the selection and transmission of news to be cabled from day to day or from week to week so as to give general satisfaction. As this matter presents itself to my mind, the first thing necessary is the appointment of a proper controlling authority and impartial tribunal. In my view the first consideration is an efficient and responsible Board of Control with headquarters in London, assisted by branch Boards in the several oversea communities which have been referred to. I am satisfied that there would be no difficulty in each Government selecting

a sufficient number of representative, independent, public-spirited, moderate-minded men to act in an honorary capacity as members of an Imperial Intelligence Board, in each capital city.

The chief duty of these Boards would be to direct the policy to be followed, and to appoint a staff of paid officers, including a Chief and Assistant Editors, to carry out that policy efficiently. The staff would be responsible to each respective Board. The number of such paid officers would depend upon the plan adopted, and this I shall presently allude to. Whatever the number, it would be no more difficult for the Boards of Control to obtain on satisfactory business terms men equally able, equally faithful to their duties as the editorial staffs employed by the great public Journals, and we all know how well the world is served through the Press in this respect.

As the proposal is not an ordinary dividend-seeking project, but a great Intelligence Union with high Imperial aims, it is undesirable and it is quite unnecessary to maintain high rates for the transmission of messages. Cheap cable telegraphy must be recognised to be a powerful, indeed an indispensable, aid to Imperial consolidation, it is therefore felt that the policy should be adopted of reducing progressively the charges on messages transmitted by the circle of Empire Cables to rates which, while still leaving the service self-supporting, would be the lowest possible. It is capable of proof that if this policy be adopted, two results will follow after providing for actual working expenses. (1) For several hours daily the Board of Control will be enabled to transmit free Press messages for simultaneous publication in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, and elsewhere. (2) The charges on ordinary paying traffic will steadily be lowered and will gradually approach a minimum. Under this policy we would have public messages transmitted free or at a mere nominal rate, and if we apply the principle of a uniform charge for all distances (as in Imperial

penny-postage), there are the best reasons for anticipating a wonderful reduction in the rate for the transmission of ordinary paying messages by the route of the great girdle of Imperial Cables. I can see no reason why the charge should not eventually be reduced to the uniform rate of a penny a letter, or sixpence a word, between the Mother Country and each of the countries named, as well as reciprocally between any two of them. The immense advantage of such a possible reduction will be readily appreciated when it is remembered that the present charge between Great Britain and Australia is three shillings per word, and at the time of the Colonial Conference of 1887, when the Pacific Cable was first earnestly considered, the common charge was nine shillings a word.

The possibility of these results will be made apparent by reference to page 35 and other pages of the papers appended to my letter to Lord Elgin.¹

PLANS PROPOSED.

With respect to the course to be followed by the controlling Boards in carrying on the Intelligence Service, omitting details, two general plans suggest themselves for consideration.

The first plan—Each Board to take means through an efficient staff of paid officers to collect information of general interest desirable to be made known in distant parts. Such information, after being arranged and properly edited for publication, to be regularly transmitted by telegraph and made available for the Press throughout the Empire free of charge.

The second or alternative plan is to leave the question of the supply of news within the Empire in the hands of the Press, as at present, and to encourage and secure the transmission of a copious supply of desirable information by lowering the Press charge to a merely nominal rate. I am

¹ See Canadian Parliamentary Return (Nos. 67 and 67A, 1906), to be obtained, free of charge, on application to the Secretary of the Eighty Club, 3 Hare Court, Temple, London, E.C.

reminded that this principle is already adopted in the United Kingdom, where the Press rate is reduced to less than one-eighth of a penny per word (1s. for 100 words) for any distance. This reduction is made purely in the interest of the general public, and it seems to me that the same principle may with inestimable advantage be applied to the infinitely larger area of the British Empire by means of the Globe-girdling Imperial Cable System.

The second plan, if not so comprehensive as the first, would, if adopted, indefinitely widen the present most restricted and meagre scope of the Press Cable Service throughout the Empire. It would leave the question of selection of news in the hands of those well fitted for the duty. By promoting emulation among representatives of the Press, it would pave the way for a *daily review*, in many instances, of the progress of events and occurrences in the sisterhood of British States, which would do more than any other agency to foster an intelligent intimacy, mould a broad public opinion, promote mutual sympathy, and present the Empire as a living reality to all.

The two plans have each distinct merits. While the first would best meet the needs of much of the outer Empire, the second would probably better suit London and the populous Colonial capitals; it would likewise, as it appears to me, remove every difficulty raised by the various speakers on the 20th ultimo in respect to the selection of matter to be transmitted for publication. I incline to the opinion that the merits of both suggestions should be secured by a combination of the two plans, but this is a point which can be determined by a Joint Committee duly appointed, or by the Boards of Control when they come to be constituted.

EMPIRE CABLES AND CABLE COMPANIES.

A girdle of State Cables, to knit together great regions under the British Flag which are separated by the oceans of the Globe, cannot be established without affecting to some

extent the operation of cables laid by private companies. In a case such as that now laid between Australia and South Africa, where the route of the State cable would be parallel, the interference may be serious to the Company. In this case the Company should be dealt with in the most liberal spirit, and their cable available for that portion of the globe-encircling chain should be purchased at its full value for the use of the State. The remaining cables of the Company would remain to be utilised in the mutual interchange of traffic under arrangements to be agreed upon. In respect to this question it will always be borne in mind that the object of the Empire Cables is not competitive; that the primary object is the solution of a great Imperial problem; and that many far-seeing men are of opinion that a solution will not be achieved by any other means.

If, as in the case of the Pacific Cable Board and the Eastern Extension Company, there be some clashing of public and private interests, the incident is unavoidable, and in the end the interests of the Empire must prevail. The Pacific Cable should be regarded as the initial link of the globe-girdling chain, and it can never be forgotten that its establishment was determined on by six British Governments, that the deed of State partnership was executed on the last day of the century, and that this inheritance from the Victorian era is pregnant with beneficent consequences to coming generations.

In my letter to Lord Elgin, which I have already mentioned, the matter is referred to. The whole subject is also exhaustively dealt with in a little book (*The All-Red Line*) recently published by Edward Stanford, Long Acre, London. In chapter ix. Dr. Morse specially considers "Imperial Partnership in a Cable System." The Canadian Parliamentary Returns, Nos. 67 and 67A, issued a few weeks ago, contain a number of documents in which the subject is discussed; on page 34 will be found a paper on State Cables and Cheap Telegraphy as aids to Imperial consolidation, and much information will be found on pages 41 to 50, embracing the papers circulated over the world

by the Ottawa Board of Trade. Again, the subject is considered in a memorandum included with the proceedings of the Conference of Premiers in 1902 (page 146), presented to the Imperial Parliament by command of His Majesty.

To all these I would wish to direct attention in order to make plain the position of the Companies and their relation to the present proposal respecting the establishment of the Empire Cables.

ESTIMATE OF COST.

The capital required to establish the Globe-encircling Imperial Telegraph System now proposed is estimated to be within £5,000,000. This sum does not include the Pacific Cable (which may be regarded as a section of the whole system), extending from Canada to New Zealand and Australia, already established. As pointed out in my letter to Lord Elgin, the sum named includes a national cable across the Atlantic and a nationalised land line through Canada. These, together with the Pacific Cable, will connect London with Australasia by a continuous line of telegraph directly under State control. The estimate includes an expenditure of £1,750,000 to establish Empire Cables in the Indian Ocean as the means of connecting India and South Africa with Australia and the Pacific Cable. It includes also £2,250,000 to establish Cables in the Atlantic Ocean for the purpose of connecting South Africa with England by way of the West Indies and Bermuda, thus completing the Empire-girdling State-owned Telegraph System.

Since my arrival in London I have had the estimate examined by capable experts, whose calculations go to show that £5,000,000 is ample.

CABLES IN TIME OF WAR.

With respect to the cutting of cables in time of War. During the last two great wars we have had little evidence of

cables having been destroyed. Though this may be true, no one can predict what may or may not be done in the future. This much may be affirmed, the tendency of the Empire Cables would be to prevent wars. But even if no such tendency should result, as the Empire Cables would be *supplementary*, we could not by any possibility be worse off in war-time *with* them than *without* them.

It is needless to say that care would be taken to lay the Empire Cables in the least vulnerable positions. Moreover, let us not forget that the complete circle of the Empire Cables would have an advantage peculiar to itself. If cut at any point on one side of the Globe, there would remain the possibility of maintaining communication by the arc of the circle around the other side of the Globe.

The Imperial scheme of Cables is designed for Peace. Its highest purpose is to weld together and build up a great commercial Oceanic Empire. War does not frequently occur. There may be no war for thirty or many more years. Would we be justified in refusing to take advantage of the tremendous value of State-owned Cables in consolidating the Empire, on the ground that it would be possible to cut them should war break out in the remote future?

CONCLUSION.

I trust I have satisfactorily met the criticisms which have been made. I am greatly encouraged to think that the political party, represented by the "Eighty Club," which, in the words of Lord Coleridge, "laid the foundation of our modern policy of a self-governing Empire," will perceive how helpful the scheme I have endeavoured to explain may become; unlike fiscal or kindred proposals it involves no political difficulties, its essential feature is to make for that knowledge without which attempts to organise the Empire may be fruitful of disaster if they in any way interfere with that complete local autonomy so jealously prized. I appre-

hend it will be obvious to all, that the scheme submitted embraces the principle of *inter-Imperial co-operation*, and is designed to form, in a very practical manner, a complete bond of union between the old land and all the new lands; that it is an instrument to enable us to ascertain what to avoid and what to accept; that its tendency must be to reconcile the interests of the whole with the interests of each part, and to foster a oneness of sentiment, a unity of sympathy pre-eminently necessary to bring home the feeling to our people the world over, that they are part of a great political organism whose chief mission is progress and peace.

I venture to think that every patriotic man will recognise in such a co-operative bond of union and friendship, embracing the widest geographical range, a powerful and peaceful means of giving shape and growth and solidarity to the modern Empire.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

III.

(*ADDENDUM*)

AN IMPERIAL INTELLIGENCE UNION AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE EMPIRE

BY THE VERY REVEREND DANIEL M. GORDON

Principal of Queen's University, Canada

From QUEEN'S QUARTERLY for October 1906

THERE has lately been issued by order of Parliament a sessional paper on the establishment of an Imperial Intelligence Service and a system of Empire Cables.¹ The subject with which this paper deals should be of interest to all lovers of our Empire, as it contemplates the establishment of a globe-encircling system of State-owned cables, together with an Imperial Intelligence Department, as a means of advancing the consolidation of the Empire.

For some years we have had a good deal of writing and talking about Imperial consolidation, with suggestions more or less definite for the formation of an Imperial Council, or other representative assembly, which might take special cognizance of those interests that affect the Empire at large, and in whose deliberations the views of each part of the Empire might be heard. In order, however, to prepare the way for any forward movement in this direction, it is absolutely necessary that the different parts of the Empire, both the Mother Country and the Greater Britain beyond the seas, should possess a fuller and more accurate knowledge of each other than they have yet attained. No doubt such information is spreading. Australia, Canada, and South Africa are better known in England and to each other to-day than they were even a few years ago. But there is still so much to be desired in this respect that

¹ Parliamentary Return embracing a communication to the Right Hon. the Earl of Elgin, Secretary of State for the Colonies, from Sir Sandford Fleming, with other documents appended thereto. Dominion of Canada Sessional Papers, Nos. 67 and 67A, 1906 (see footnote, page 5).

it seems utterly vain to talk of the closer consolidation of the Empire until its various component parts become more fully acquainted with each other. The information at present given by the Press of these several countries concerning each of them, from day to day and from week to week, is as slight as if the countries were in nowise connected. If the newspapers throughout the lands that float the Union Jack could give their readers as full information regarding the different parts of the Empire as the papers of the United States give regarding the ongoings in the several States, it would bring the British people into such close touch with each other that the problems connected with Imperial consolidation would soon become easy of solution. Mutual knowledge would lead to closer friendship and to unity of sentiment and of purpose, so that wise and well-considered action could be taken towards more intimate relations in trade and government.

The proposal set forth in this lately published State Paper is "that all the self-governing British communities in both hemispheres be brought into direct electric touch with each other and all with the Mother Country; that cable telegraphs should connect each adjacent or proximate community, in such a manner as to constitute with the connecting land lines a continuous chain of telegraph around the globe, and thus admit of messages being sent in either direction from any one British State to any other British State. This globe-encircling chain of telegraph cables would extend from England to Canada, and thence to New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, and the West Indies, returning to England by way of Bermuda with a branch to Nova Scotia or Newfoundland. That this system of connecting lines may be of the highest Imperial advantage it is essential that it be wholly State-owned and State-controlled." The estimates go to show that the cost of the whole circle of cable telegraph proposed would not exceed £5,000,000.

If such a system of cables were once established, they might be used daily for the transmission of general intelligence during the hours when they were not required for commercial service. This intelligence might be furnished by a department to be formed for the purpose, which might act in harmony with those who supply information for the Press, and which might secure in the different countries interested the publication of intelligence regarding matters of leading importance. In one of the documents in this State Paper it is suggested that the headquarters of such an intelligence department would naturally find its proper place in England. "Besides the Imperial Board of Intelligence in London, possibly branch

Boards would be desirable in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India, Africa, the West Indies, and elsewhere. All the Boards should consist of representative and independent public men, whose duty it would be to obtain for dissemination over the Empire accurate information and unbiassed opinions on all subjects of general interest; the information so obtained would be cabled daily or weekly as may be determined to the London Board and to all the branch Boards for publication. Some such organisation would become a most potent Imperial agency. It would prove to be an invaluable means of educating our people everywhere respecting the life, opinions, and aspirations of all our fellow-subjects in the several parts of the Empire. It would directly place before each section of the British world the views formed or forming in all other sections. Two hours a day would easily admit of 10,000 or 12,000 words being transmitted each week. This full volume of news published simultaneously in the chief centres of the Empire would have a wonderful influence. The good to result from a mutual interchange of information and sentiment is beyond calculation. Obviously it would steadily have a unifying tendency if every day in the year the pulsations of the great heart of the motherland could be felt by kith and kin beyond the seas, and if also every man within as well as without the central kingdom could read in his morning paper the same sympathetic evidences of interest in the common welfare, and all fresh from his fellow-subjects in all quarters of the globe."

Whatever diversity of opinion may be developed as to the best way of managing such a service and of preparing the statements that may be issued from day to day or from week to week for the information of the various parts of the British Empire, there could be no doubt as to the desirability of some such department as is here proposed. The system of cables would be of the greatest value in connection with the extension of commerce between the countries thus related, and even from this point of view would seemingly prove a profitable investment, as, according to evidence submitted in the Parliamentary Return, the charges for oversea messages by the great circle of Empire Cables would be greatly reduced. In addition to the commercial value of the scheme it would serve, as has been said, to make the different parts of the Empire more intimately acquainted with each other, so that with increasing mutual knowledge there might come increased confidence, closer correspondence of national ideals with growing unity of purpose and of life.

The testimony on this point that is given in the paper before us

is really surprising. The proposal has received the endorsement of Chambers of Commerce and of many prominent representative men. At the Fifth Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire held at Montreal in August 1903, it was unanimously approved, and it was recognised that such an inter-Imperial line of communication "would constitute the most effective means by which the several governmental units of the Empire may hold communion with each other whenever they desire, and that while it would be of the highest importance to the commercial and social interests of the British people around the world, it would, by the subtle force of electricity, at once promote the consolidation of the Empire and prove an indispensable factor in Imperial unity." This view was again confirmed at the Sixth Congress of Chambers of Commerce recently held in London.

But while the resolutions of Chambers of Commerce may fitly represent the opinions of manufacturers, merchants, and other business men, more surprising even than their testimony is that of over fifty representative Canadians from very different departments and connections in life, whose letters on the subject are here presented, men who are outside the sphere of commercial life and who agree in regarding the scheme as thoroughly practicable and of the greatest importance.

The writers are all well-known men of prominent position, and they appear to have been selected for the reason that they are removed from the active politics of the day. The evidence furnished is presented in this valuable parliamentary paper in four groups, embracing A, Statesmen; B, Judges; C, Heads of Universities and Colleges; and D, Prominent Clergymen. Group A contains the views of three lieutenant-governors: (1) His Honour Sir Henry G. Joly de Lotbiniere, Lieut.-Governor of British Columbia; (2) His Honour the late Alfred G. Jones, Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia; (3) His Honour Wm. Mortimer Clark, Lieut.-Governor of Ontario. To these may now be added His Honour D. C. Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, whose views appear in Group A as a Supreme Court Judge of Nova Scotia. There are four French-Canadians in this group, embracing M. H. A. A. Brault, President de la Chambre de Commerce du district de Montreal; M. J. George Garneau, present Mayor of Quebec; Very Rev. Monsignor Laflamme, of Laval University; and Benjamin Sulte, ex-President of the Royal Society of Canada. We find also in this group the names of Sir William C. Macdonald and Dean Bovey, of McGill University; Sir William P. Howland, P.C.,

and Colonel Denison, of Toronto ; Professor Adam Shortt of Queen's University, and the late Sir Robert Thorburn, formerly Premier of Newfoundland.

It is interesting to note, by way of illustration, the views expressed by some of these gentlemen. Their testimony on such a matter is too valuable to be confined to a parliamentary blue-book. Thus, His Honour the Lieut.-Governor of Ontario, writes :—

“The dissemination of more information regarding each other among the Colonies than at present prevails, is a condition precedent to any successful effort being made for a closer Imperial union. I may venture to say that the people of the Motherland require to be educated regarding this subject quite as much as do the Colonies ; the ignorant indifference of apparently intelligent persons in Britain regarding the vast interests involved in the unification of our Empire is lamentable.

“The plan you advocate for the telegraphic transmission of intelligence among our various dependencies must commend itself as one which will do much to prepare the minds of the people for at some future time adopting some plan for carrying out a closer union between the numerous nationalities which form our great Empire.”

Monsignor Laflamme writes :—

“You are right in saying that before trying to unite the various national elements of the Empire, it is prudent and even necessary to make these elements acquainted with each other. I imagine that by going too fast we might reach the opposite extreme. A solid public opinion, the only kind on which one can safely count, is not a thing that can be improvised ; still less can it be imposed. It can only be reached by long and patient effort.

“Evidently the first step to take, is to circulate abundantly all information calculated to spread knowledge throughout the Empire and make known the mind of the various populations. Then only we may be able to say what scheme is fit for realisation, and in what measure.

“Allow me to say that the Province of Quebec would be specially glad of the creating of such a Bureau of Information.”

M. J. G. Garneau writes :—

“I believe that it is in the common interest of England and her Colonies to draw as closely as possible the ties of commercial relationship, which give a practical basis for that feeling of interdependence and solidarity which is the best safeguard of the common weal. As the glorious constitution under which we live was gradually evolved from the teachings of experience, so must the idea of Imperial unity be arrived at by the aspiration of the component elements, united by the comprehension of their common interests. In order to arrive at this comprehension, it is essential that ignorance and prejudice be dispelled, and any means tending to this end must be a step in the right direction. The British Empire embraces many races and languages, and the spirit of loyalty to a common Crown and Government must be fostered by a broad and just tolerance of the individual characteristics and legitimate aspirations of its component races.

“An Imperial Intelligence Department, such as suggested, to centralise and distribute *reliable* information, cannot but do much good, and your idea about the chain of Empire Cables seems a very practical step towards the realisation of that object.”

Sir William C. Macdonald writes :—

“I can find only words of commendation for what you have written, especially the point you make of laying as speedily as practicable a chain of State-owned Cables and Telegraphs to link together the Mother Country and all her outlying Colonies. This is really the first step to be taken, binding together with cords of steel, and affording time for reflection as to what should follow next. These cables will be to the Empire what the nerves are to the human body.”

M. Benjamin Sulte writes :—

“The great question of the day is the unification of the Empire—the more perfect union of all the parts. But the parts do not know one another. So long as this ignorance of one State or Province in regard to another remains, with all the prejudices it engenders, so long will it be perfectly impossible to accomplish anything practical and lasting. Let us commence by getting to know one another. It is too early for a Council ; it is just the time for an Intelligence Department, together with a Cable Service linking the principal groups of the Colonies to the Mother Country. This first step being taken, and some knowledge acquired thereby, we will see how to proceed further in the direction of mutual arrangements, if then found possible.”

Group B consists wholly of judges, headed by Chancellor Sir John Boyd, President of the High Court of Justice of Ontario, and it includes distinguished jurists from the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan, and also from Newfoundland.

Chancellor Sir J. A. Boyd expresses more or less closely the sentiments of the other ten judges who are included in this Group when he says :—

“I favour any method or movement which will bring or tend to bring the Mother Country and her outlying members into closer and more sympathetic relations. The scheme suggested by you of a system of telegraphic ocean cables whereby intercommunication may be had amongst all parts of the Empire with the maximum of speed and the minimum of expense, recommends itself as furthering greatly this end of bringing all parts into closer touch with the centre, and the centre with all the parts. Besides this, let all other means be used to dispel the common ignorance of each other now so greatly prevailing, and to bring in mutual knowledge and confidence which will follow better acquaintanceship. Care being taken on all sides to avoid any revolutionary jar, the future appears full of promise for the steady growth of a closer and more intelligent union between England and the English-speaking Colonies—which shall shape for itself that outward form best fitting and expressing the living political organism which it embodies.”

The Hon. Justice Landry, of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick, writes :—

“I have no hesitation in arriving at the conclusion that the scheme is in the best interests of the Empire, if the details can be worked out. The subject is very important. My best wishes are with you and its promoters for its success.”

The Hon. Justice Russell, of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, writes :—

“I have read your letters, and hasten to say that I am in entire accord with every word in them, and thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity to read them.”

⁵ The Hon. Chief-Justice Sullivan, of the Supreme Court of P. E. Island, writes :—

“I have read your letters with much interest, and I desire to say that I fully share your views with regard to the advantage which the Empire would derive from the operations of such an Intelligence Department.”

In Group C are given exclusively the views of the Principals of twelve Canadian seats of learning. Extracts from the letters of a few of these may illustrate the opinions generally expressed.

The Rev. Dr. Bland, of Wesley College, Winnipeg :—

“The first thing to be secured for the development and strengthening of Imperial unity is that the various parts of the Empire should be brought to know each other better. Out of that will come a deeper sympathy. That sympathy is the essential thing whether it give birth to an Imperial Council or find a better organ in consultation among the Premiers. But that is a question which one need not precipitately settle. The first need is fuller and closer intimacy, and to this probably nothing would contribute so effectively as a Free Press Cable Service around the world.”

Principal Falconer, Presbyterian College, Halifax :—

“I think there can be no doubt that while we hope strongly for a larger Imperial unity in the not very distant future, at present the only safe and really effective method of promoting it is to increase our knowledge of, and friendship for, one another throughout the Empire, that it will ere long be seen by the various parts of His Majesty’s dominion that a closer union of some sort is supremely reasonable. We may allow time, perhaps almost unconsciously, to work out the comprehensive plan.”

President Ian C. Hannah, King’s College, Windsor, N.S. :—

“I am enthusiastically in agreement with the views you express. In South Africa, Canada, and other parts of the Empire where I have resided, I have been much impressed by the purely local character of most of the contents of the newspapers. Newspaper men are unanimous in telling me it is a question of money; it costs so much more to get distant telegrams

than to publish local gossip. On all grounds I feel the value of the suggestion of Free Press news within the limits of the Empire, and devoutly hope the scheme may be realised in no distant future."

Principal MacLaren, Knox College, Toronto :—

"I am glad to find myself largely in accord with the views set forth in your letter. The Imperial question is forcing itself on the attention of all thoughtful subjects of the British Crown. Not very long ago the attempt to unite more closely by political bonds the scattered portions of the British Empire seemed scarcely within the range of practical statesmanship. But the modern applications of steam and electricity are drawing the distant parts of the earth so closely together that what was formerly impracticable seems daily to grow more feasible. In matters of this kind, however, it is especially necessary not to outrun public opinion. To bring all parts of the Empire into intelligent and sympathetic touch with each other should certainly be the first step towards closer political relations, and your proposal for an Imperial Intelligence Department and a Free Press Cable Service seems eminently fitted to prepare the way for those closer political relations to which we should look."

Monsignor O. E. Mathieu, C.M.G., Rector of Laval University, Quebec :—

"Allow me to offer you my most sincere congratulations on the right ideas you express in regard to the prudence required in dealing with an enlightenment of public opinion, especially when we consider the state of ignorance which exists throughout our vast Empire concerning each of its different parts. To dispel this ignorance is an excellent work."

Principal Patrick, of Manitoba College, Winnipeg :—

"I am a profound believer in the unity of the Empire, and I desire to further that unity in all possible ways, but I am convinced that the people of the Empire are not ripe even for the formation of an Imperial Council, and that anything in the shape of a constitution interfering with the free action of the different nationalities would do harm rather than good. The constitution of the Empire must be a growth, arising out of the needs and interests of the times. It will come naturally, so to speak, when the people are educated for it. If it is to come soon; if the unity which all desire is to be more than a name and an aspiration; the dissemination of sound and full information touching the views, habits, products, and needs of the different peoples will be of essential service. Hence I look with the greatest favour on the suggestion of an Imperial Intelligence Department, believing that such a department wisely officered and administered would do much to unite the different portions of the Empire by furnishing them with the truths and facts which would form the basis for common conclusions and common action. To the forces thus generated I attach a higher value than to anything which may be advised in the shape of an experimental constitution."

The late Principal Sheraton, Wycliffe College, Toronto :—

"Imperial unity, however, must be a growth. Whatever form it takes, it must be the expression of the inner life and conviction of the country. You

cannot secure it merely by legislation. There must be a community of sentiment and conviction, and this can only be promoted by a more intimate knowledge and by getting the different parts of the Empire into closer touch with one another. . . . Whatever form the political development assumes, nothing can be done without mutual knowledge, and whatever helps to promote that mutual knowledge and to bring the various Provinces and Dependencies of the Empire into closer touch with one another is not only most desirable, but it is essential to any advance in the right direction. The establishment of an Imperial Intelligence Department would be a splendid step in the right direction. What we want to do is to dissipate ignorance and to bring all these races and dependencies into touch with one another."

Group D gives the opinions of sixteen of the leading clergymen of Canada. Two of these are Roman Catholic Archbishops, seven are Church of England Bishops, and the remainder are Methodists and Presbyterians, including four ex-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church. The views expressed by these can best be given in a few extracts from their letters. The Bishop of Algoma says :—

" Nothing in my judgment is more needed or better calculated to promote the cause of Imperial unity and progress, than the proposal you have laid before me in your letters. And I am firmly convinced that you are right in saying that, for the present, what we should seek first and above all else is a better knowledge of each other as the true basis upon which Imperial Institutions may be built securely when the time is ripe."

Rev. Dr. Armstrong, of Ottawa :—

" I hail with patriotic delight anything that will tend to bring the various parts of our great Empire into closer and more sympathetic union. It seems to me you have put first things first when you advocate an Imperial Intelligence Department. It is certainly in the line of progress and pre-eminently safe. The opportune time will come for something more, but Unions on paper without carrying the intelligence are unsafe and often hurtful."

Rev. Dr. Barclay, St. Paul's Church, Montreal :—

" My sympathies are entirely and enthusiastically with you in your wise and practical proposals."

Rev. Dr. Milligan, Toronto :—

" I think the Greater Britain must be a growth, like its predecessor, in order to be healthy and strong. Men are too ready to intermeddle with Providence. He that believeth in a Great British future will not make haste. The spread of knowledge in the way you indicate and the assimilations which time alone can effect are the surest means of giving us an Empire, which I trust God will use as a mighty instrument in the promotion of peace and prosperity in the world."

The late Archbishop O'Brien, of Halifax :—

" It seems to me your proposal, in your letters addressed to the Canadian Club, is practicable, and would be a first step towards unity of the Empire."

The Bishop of Nova Scotia :—

“ Your proposals are fully in accord with my own views. The strangely vague ideas which residents in different parts of the Empire have of each other, and their various resources and capabilities, would readily give place to a definite conception of the possibilities of all. Your proposals are both sensible and practical.”

The Bishop of Niagara :—

“ I am in hearty agreement with your views. . . . There is no doubt that the Imperial Intelligence Department must precede the formation of an Imperial Council, and in fact lead up to it. The former can be entered upon immediately, and with small expense. It will be the forerunner of the latter. I am sure that on this point the largest possible consensus of opinion will be with you.”

The Bishop of Ottawa :—

“ There can be no doubt that free and frequent intercourse between the people in all parts of the Empire must promote that nearer acquaintance which produces and promotes mutual confidence and which will bring us all in one ; and the intelligent, powerful union of the British Empire means a great deal not only for the English-speaking people, but for the nations of the world generally.”

Rev. Dr. Potts, Toronto :—

“ There is no doubt that this movement is growing and is tending more and more to the unity of the Empire. Imperial Unity is not a thing to be hurried too fast, but nothing will tend to draw the various parts of the Empire together as much as information.”

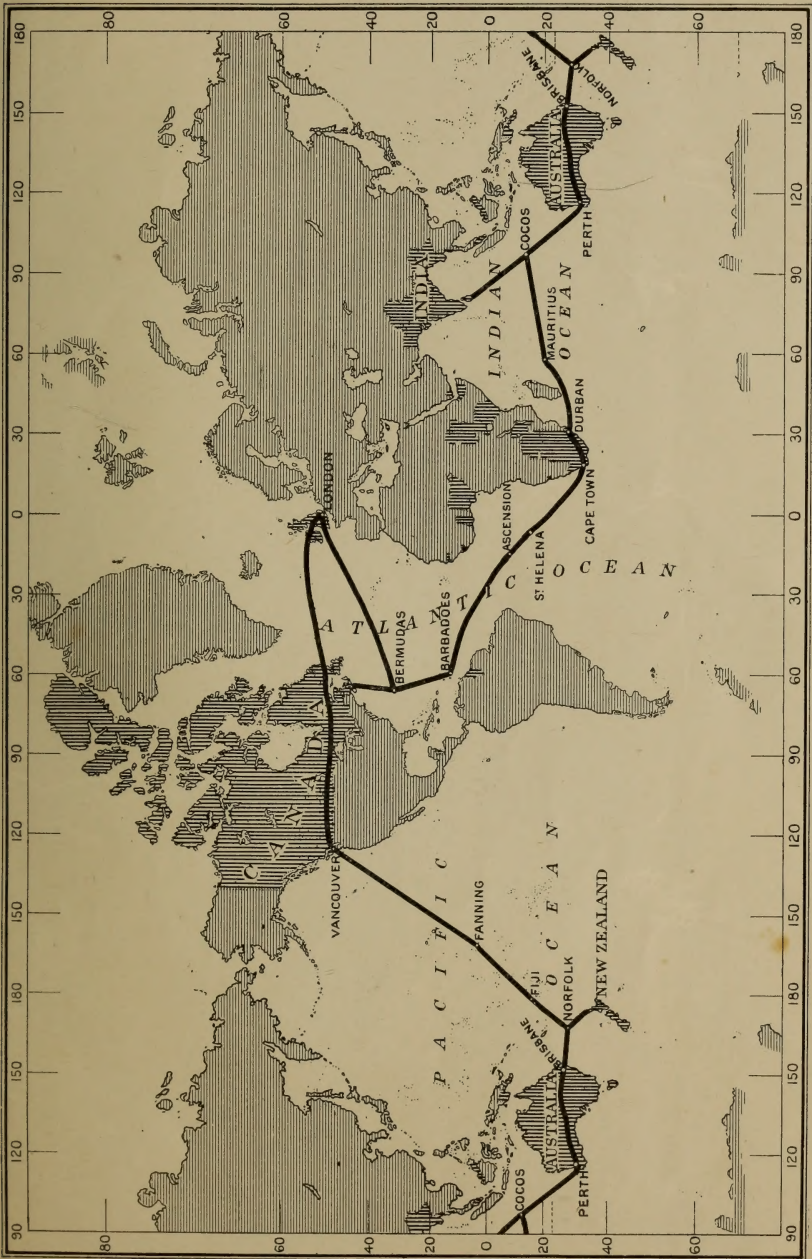
From these extracts, which are more or less fully endorsed in the other letters referred to, it seems clear that men who may fairly be regarded as representing the educated opinion of Canada are in remarkable agreement upon this subject. It might, indeed, be difficult to find any other subject on which all these writers would be so cordially and emphatically agreed. This fact may in no small measure affect the views of thoughtful men in other parts of the British Empire. For ourselves, we hope that those who have been most actively engaged in bringing this important matter before the notice of Canadians may find it attract the lively and sympathetic interest of British subjects everywhere. To quote once more from one of the documents in this State paper regarding the expressions of opinion already referred to. “ The views expressed by these gentlemen may fairly be regarded as the voice of Canada. They are in substantial agreement with the recorded opinions of the commercial men of the Empire, and it can scarcely be doubted that they will be found in accord with prevailing opinions in the United

Kingdom, in New Zealand, in Australia, and in South Africa. All heard from are substantially of one mind as to the establishment of a great channel of communication, linking together in an electric girdle the self-governing British communities. They appear to think that it is of transcendent importance to inaugurate an Imperial Cable Service, which, while satisfying in the highest degree the needs of commerce, would at the same time perform the functions of a continuous spinal cord encircling the globe, by and through which would freely flow every national aspiration, every sympathetic impulse of the British people in every longitude and latitude."

With all of which we heartily agree.

IV.

CHART OF SYSTEM OF EMPIRE CABLES



Stanford's Geogr. Estab^t, London.

